



water pepper

Polygonum hydropiperoides

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta - flowering plants

Features

Water pepper is a perennial herb with upright stems that usually are branched and may be up to one foot long. The lance-shaped leaves are arranged alternately on the stem and are about four inches long. Each leaf has sheath bearing bristles at the base of the leaf stalk. The white to pink flowers are less than one-fourth inch long and are arranged in clusters along the stem. The black, triangular fruits are about one-eighth inch long.

Natural History

Water pepper grows in wet soil in road ditches, marshes, and wet meadows. It flowers July through September. Waterfowl eat the fruits.

Habitats

natural lakes and prairie marshes; wet prairies and fens; interior rivers and streams; Mississippi River

Iowa Status

uncommon; native

Iowa Range

scattered throughout Iowa in suitable habitats

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.